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DEPT. FOR EUR/SE AND NEA/I

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SUBJECT: TURKEY NIXES GOI DELEGATION WITH KDP AND KRG  
REPRESENTATIVES

REF: 10/25/07 WILSON E-MAIL

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Turkey's Iraq Coordinator Celikkol told Ambassador during an October 25 meeting that the GOT will not accept representatives of Iraqi Kurdish political parties nor of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in bilateral security discussions proposed by the GOI. Pointing to the presence of Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) foreign policy advisor Safeen Dizayee and KRG Minister named Imad Ahmed on the GOI diplomatic note announcing the Iraqi delegation, Celikkol said the GOT views this as yet another attempt on the part of the Iraqis to compel Turkish recognition of the KRG -- which it will not do.

¶2. (C) Celikkol emphasized that Turkey has no problem with the participation of Iraqi Kurds in talks with it. Turkey has no problem working with FM Zebari. One of the names on the GOI delegation list is a Kurd affiliated with either the KDP or PUK, but, again, has a position with the government in Baghdad. PM Maliki can send an entirely Kurdish delegation if he wishes. However, the delegation should represent Iraq's central government, not the KRG or Kurdish political parties.

¶3. (C) Ambassador drew attention to the insistence of FM Babacan and Celikkol on an Iraqi delegation that would be authoritative and could make decisions. While party representatives may not be the most appropriate participants, it is very reasonable that Baghdad would include in bilateral and trilateral talks representatives of the regional government that will bear the brunt of the responsibility and action against the PKK. Deputy PM Cemil Cicek had commented to him the day before on the need to respect the authority of the central government. If Baghdad designates KRG or other provincial officials as part of its delegations for talks with other countries, we should respect its authority to do so. Celikkol said that there was no discussion when Babacan was in Baghdad about the nature of the Iraqi delegation to these bilateral talks beyond the identification of three ministers who would come. He had participated in all of

Babacan's meetings and denied the FM said anything at all about Kurds in these talks; nor had the Iraqis. He concluded that these bilateral talks were Iraq's idea, not Turkey's; that Iraq had announced them, not Turkey; and now Iraq was creating a new crisis by including KRG affiliations in its delegation that it knew Turkey would not accept.

¶4. (C) Ambassador went over the same ground by telephone with Presidency/PM foreign affairs advisor Davutoglu, who was similarly negative on anything that smacks of recognition of the KRG, but seemed willing to look for practical solutions. He spoke later with FM Babacan. Celikkol called Ambassador thereafter to advise that the GOT had devised a short-term solution to allow an initial round of discussions with the Iraqi delegation, which had already departed Baghdad. They have scheduled two separate meetings initially. One will include the GOT Minister of Interior with the GOI Ministers of Defense and National Security. The second will involve the Iraqi Chief of Intelligence with his Turkish counterpart. What occurs thereafter will depend in part on what transpires during those meetings.

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